

# **Who Will Do What With What**

## **Defining U.S. Navy and Marine Corps**

### **Roles, Functions, and Missions**

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**Center for Naval Analyses**  
*Alexandria, Virginia*

<b>Report Documentation Page</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
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1. REPORT DATE <b>MAY 1993</b>	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-1993 to 00-00-1993</b>		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Who Will Do What With What. Defining U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Roles, Functions, and Missions</b>			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
			5b. GRANT NUMBER	
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)			5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
			5e. TASK NUMBER	
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>CNA Analysis &amp; Solutions,Center for Naval Analyses ,4825 Mark Center Drive,Alexandria,VA,22311</b>			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>				
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
14. ABSTRACT				
15. SUBJECT TERMS				
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>Same as Report (SAR)</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>34</b>
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON	

This paper is extracted from CNA Research Memorandum 92-126, *Who Will Do What With What: Defining U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Roles, Functions, and Missions Through the Twentieth Century*, by Adam B. Siegel, August 1992. Refer to the research memorandum for specific citations in the text.

The author would like to thank the following for reading earlier drafts of this paper: Jeffrey Barlow, Contemporary History Branch, Naval Historical Center; Allan Millett, Ohio State University; and Jeffrey Sands, Center for Naval Analyses.

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**Who Will Do What With What**  
**Defining U.S. Navy and Marine Corps**  
**Roles, Functions, and Missions**

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## INTRODUCTION

At the core of decision-making about U.S. military forces lies the question of what roles and functions are assigned to each component of the national defense structure. In theory, resources are then distributed to reflect mission requirements. Today, the nation is in the midst of a review of mission requirements and resource allocations to national defense. This paper provides a backdrop to today's debate by examining the historical debate over "who will do what with what."

This examination briefly reviews the debates over the U.S. military services' roles, functions, and missions. In addition to a chronological discussion, the paper highlights factors that drive roles and missions debates and relates these factors to today's debate. The discussion emphasizes the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps perspective. The intent is to provide a sense of how the U.S. military structure arrived at where it is today, thus laying a framework for examining potential alternative future structures and assignments of roles, functions, and missions.

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## THE DEBATES TO WORLD WAR I

From its earliest days, the Republic faced the need to establish a legal basis for the military and to define the roles and missions of any forces thus created. The Constitution assigned Congress the responsibility “to raise and support Armies, but no Appropriations of money to that Use shall be for a longer term than two Years.” Congress was also “to provide and maintain a Navy.” For the next 150 years, this split between land and sea remained the primary distinction in the definition of roles and missions for the U.S. military. Although for both the Department of War and the Department of the Navy debates occurred over levels of allocations and appropriate strategies to be pursued, they remained generally divorced from each other in terms of missions and functions.

The most serious friction arose between the two departments in fault zones—areas of overlapping authority and interest, such as in the command and control of forces in joint operations and in coastal defense responsibilities. The existence and role of the Marine Corps fell into just such a fault zone. Following the Continental Congress’ 10 November 1775 resolution that there be “two battalions of American Marines,” General George Washington vigorously protested the drain on his manpower, and these two battalions never formed. This conception of the Marines as competitors to, if not a drain on, Army assets did not disappear. In the 1830s, the House Committee on Military Affairs deemed the Marine Corps anomalous and urged its amalgamation into the Army. During the Civil War and following it, Congress considered, and rejected, proposals to eliminate the Corps or transfer it to the Army.

Not all issues erupted from interdepartmental squabbles. Although in the same department, Navy-Marine tension has not been restricted to barroom brawls over the past 200 years. Through much of the nineteenth century, Navy officers led the

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charge for abolishment of the Marines. For example, Navy officers sought to have sailors replace Marines as shipboard security and successfully sought legislation placing every Marine in a subordinate position to a Navy officer or sailor of the same rank. Sometimes this happened in conjunction with an Army attempt to eliminate the Corps. In 1908-9, the Navy sought to remove Marines from aboard ship, and President Roosevelt favored Army absorption of the Corps.

In general, despite occasional problems, the line of demarcation between the Navy and War departments occurred at the shoreline. Thus, until the twentieth century, the division between Army and Navy functions remained fundamentally distinct, with little confusion over which department had responsibility for which missions. One factor limiting the level of friction came from the differing foci of the two departments: the Army looked inland, at America's expansion westward and the country's land threats; the Navy looked to the oceans and, in addition to guarding America's shores, protected American interests abroad.

The Spanish-American War ended this era of minimal interaction between the two departments. In the Cuban campaign, the Army and Navy had to interact and did so poorly on some occasions, most notably and visibly during the siege of Santiago, Cuba. In 1903, in part due to the Spanish-American War's coordination failures but also due to the increased need for cooperation that the newly acquired overseas possessions created, the two departments established the Joint Army-Navy Board. The Joint Board was to confer on "all matters calling for the cooperation of the two services." Tasked to formulate broad policies for both services (including the preparation of contingency plans) and to provide advice to the Secretaries of Navy and War, the Board met infrequently in its initial years and spent much of its time on administrative matters such as determining uniform codes. Although a step toward coordinated war planning, the Joint Board's existence did not, in any substantial way, affect the definitions of service roles and missions.

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## THE INTERWAR YEARS

The aftermath of World War I, like the Spanish-American War, brought a review based on lessons from the wartime experience. One recommendation from the Joint Army-Navy Board review called for a more thorough indoctrination of all forces as to the functions of the various branches of the armed forces. In 1920, the Joint Board delineated service functions in coastal defense in *Joint Army and Navy Action in Coastal Defense*. Departmental definitions of service functions reflected these definitions.

These agreements operated essentially on pre-World War I assumptions. The advent of a new technology, however, began to change this historical dividing line. The airplane challenged these assumptions and stimulated interservice cooperation and conflict.

Through the interwar years, a number of challenges arose against the traditional definitions of Navy and War Department roles and missions, and stimulated an almost constant series of Congressional hearings. These hearings focused on two issues: (1) how to organize military aviation and (2) whether to create a new unified military department. Despite the frequent, and nearly continuous, nature of these hearings, the Navy created no permanent political bureau to supervise its response to Congress, relying instead on a series of *ad hoc* Navy boards and committees.

Aviation lay at the core of these debates. Air power advocates, such as General Billy Mitchell, pushed for both an autonomous air service and a greater reliance on air power for America's national defense needs. In 1920, Mitchell successfully lobbied for attachment of a rider to the Army appropriation bill to give the Army air service a monopoly over all land-based aviation. The amendment, defeated only after extensive Navy lobbying, would have denied the Navy shoreside training facilities, seaplane bases, and any

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other form of land-based aircraft or aviation facility. The bombing tests against the German battleship *Ostfriesland* showed that, at least in certain circumstances, modern capital ships could be vulnerable to heavy bombing attacks. This test provided grist for those who argued that sea power was obsolete and that air power should provide the premier arm in the American defense establishment. In the end, Mitchell's attempts to gain control of naval aviation failed, in part due to the Navy's organizational response. Naval aviators gained the status and independence to experiment in and expand naval aviation in the interwar years, thanks in part to Mitchell's attempts to wrest the naval air arm from the Navy.

To cope with the challenge that aviation placed on the traditional definitions of service roles and functions, the two services attempted a series of compromises. The two departments negotiated artificial barriers to maintain jurisdictional boundaries. For example, in November 1938, the War Department issued short-lived orders prohibiting Army Air Corps airplanes from flying more than 100 miles out to sea in training exercises.

Again, as had happened earlier, the Army challenged the role of the Marine Corps. Part of this challenge resulted from the Marines' role in World War I and from an Army perception that the Marines' role had been exaggerated in public accounts. Thus, the Army sought to restrict Marine functions to the shipboard responsibility and limited operations in support of a naval campaign. The latter naturally raised the issue of amphibious operations, which were to become the premier Marine Corps role. In 1927, the Army-Navy Joint Board prepared *Joint Action of the Army and Navy* (JAAN). JAAN defined respective service responsibilities in joint operations. In JAAN, the Joint Board declared that the Marine Corps was responsible for developing amphibious techniques and providing the forces for the base-seizure portion of a naval campaign.

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Despite such examples, service political battles remained relatively independent of one another, with the success or failure of one service department affecting the other only marginally. Inter-departmental issues remained peripheral rather than central for each service.

## **AFTER WORLD WAR II: UNIFICATION OR TRIPLIFICATION?**

Following World War II and the highly visible (and seemingly successful) strategic bombing campaign, the drive for a separate air service emerged with renewed vigor. Wartime experience with the Joint Chiefs and unified command, and the perceived shortfalls in the separate command structure of the two departments, facilitated the drive for unification of the military services. These two potentially contradictory drives occurred amidst a time of great strategic (the move from isolationism to global power) and fiscal (the stringencies of post-war defense cutbacks) change. These factors combined to foster a fierce debate among the services about the definition of roles and missions.

The lessons from World War II were far from definitive. Advocates of strategic air power argued that the results of the bombing campaigns and the emergence of nuclear weapons made armies and navies virtually obsolete. (See following excerpts.) Army advocates pushed for greater manpower through mandatory universal military training to meet the need to face the Russian hordes in the next war. Navy and Marine Corps advocates argued that the other forces could not operate without naval support (through seizure and protection of ports, for example). Thus, differing perceptions of the United States' strategic environment and the reality that assignment of roles and missions meant dollars in the budget turned this debate into an often fierce struggle between services.

## Army Air Corps Commentary on the Navy and Marine Corps

"To maintain a five-ocean navy to fight a no-ocean opponent. . .is a foolish waste of time, men and resources."

(Maj. Gen. H.J. Knerr, USAF, "If We Should Fight Again," *Military Review*, December 1947, p. 24.)

"Why should we have a Navy at all? There are no enemies for it to fight except apparently the Army Air Force."

(General Carl Spaatz, Army Air Corps, 1946, as quoted in Samuel P. Huntington, *The Common Defense*, New York, 1961, p. 368.)

"You gentlemen had better understand that the Army Air Force is tired of being a subordinate outfit. It was a predominant force during the war, and it is going to be a predominant force during the peace, and you might as well make up your minds whether you like it or not, and we do not care whether you like it or not. The Army Air Force is going to run the show. You, the Navy, are not going to have anything but a couple of carriers which are ineffective anyway, and they will probably be sunk in the first battle."

"Now as for the Marines. . .a small bitched-up army talking Navy lingo. We are going to put those Marines in the Regular Army and make efficient soldiers out of them."

"The Navy is going to end up only by supplying the requirement of the Army Air and the Ground Forces. . ."

(Army Air Forces Brig. Gen. Frank A. Armstrong, Jr., 11 December 1946, as quoted by Demetrios Caraley, *The Politics of Defense Unification*, New York, 1966, p. 151.)

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The Army and soon-to-be-minted Air Force sought to extend earlier sea-land demarcation between services into a new era. Rather than an “Army on land” and the “Navy at sea,” therefore, one would follow the maxim that the Army walks, the Navy sails, and the Air Force flies. The basic conflict was between a Navy organizational emphasis based on functions and an Air Force emphasis based on form. (See following excerpts.) Carried to its logical extreme, which many in the Army and Air Force favored, this concept meant elimination of the Marine Corps and an end to naval aviation.

## **National Security Act of 1947**

With the enactment of the National Security Act of 1947, the first post-war round in the debate over roles and missions came to a close. For the first time since 1798 (when the Navy Department was formed), the United States had a single statutory authority over all the armed forces below the level of the President in the National Military Establishment. The newly minted Secretary of Defense and the statutory JCS provided a basis for solving inter-service problems without Presidential intervention. In the law, the Air Force got almost all it wanted—separate and co-equal status—but not control of naval aviation. This Act did not mean an end to the debate, however, as it was primarily a work of compromise and obfuscation that entangled the services in years of further wrangling. Concerns over duplication between Air Force and Navy aviation programs spurred investigations in both the executive and legislative branches in 1947. In response to a request from the Presidential commission, the JCS met to review the programs in December. The JCS paper, meant to root out overlap, simply approved each service’s statement of requirements in accordance with their own determined force objectives based on their interpretation of their functions under the act.

## Function versus Form in Defense Organization

*The Navy concept* [of organization] maintains that the *function* should be the basis of organization, i.e., the Army, Navy, and Air Force should be assigned basic functions and given the weapons and equipment to fulfill the functions regardless of whether the weapons operate on land, sea, or in the air. The Navy concept maintains further that the fundamental objective of all military services is essentially [the] same; to strike the enemy whenever and wherever he can be reached; and that no service should be artificially restricted in the employment of its weapons as opportunity offers, provided of course that the basic function is also fulfilled.

*The Army-Air Force concept* maintains that the *weapon* should be the basis of organization, i.e., that the Air Force, for instance, should control and operate all aircraft and perform all functions of which the aircraft is capable; the Navy should control and operate all ships, etc.

...Of the two concepts the Navy's is in accord with generally accepted organizational methods in business and government. The Army-Air Force concept has no counterpart in business and government but is a purely military concept devised by military authorities in Germany and England, i.e., the German Army and Royal Air Force.

Source: Capt. L.S. Thackery, Memorandum for the Secretary of the Navy, "Summary of Marshall-King Correspondence on Anti-Submarine Warfare," 4 February 1948, A19/2, Key West Conference Supporting Papers, Section II, OP-23 files, as quoted by David A. Rosenberg and Floyd D. Kennedy, Jr., *History of the Strategic Arms Competition, 1945-1972. Supporting Study: U.S. Aircraft Carriers in the Strategic Role. Part I: Naval Strategy in a Period of Change: Interservice Rivalry, Strategic Interaction, and the Development of a Nuclear Attack Capability, 1945-1951*, Falls Church, VA, Lulejian & Associates, October 1975, p. I-68.

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## **Executive Order 9877**

On the same day as the signing of the National Security Act, 26 July 1947, President Truman issued Executive Order 9877, a complement to the act that explicitly spelled out the functions of the armed forces. This represented the most extensive definition to date of service roles and functions. Due in part to Truman's desire to issue the documents concurrently, they contained inconsistencies not ironed out before issuance. In January 1948, Secretary of Defense Forrestal sent a proposed redraft of the Executive Order to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the service secretaries, which he soon withdrew from consideration due to a lack of agreement from any side. In general, the key Navy sticking point was the role of naval aviation in, most especially, a strategic bombing campaign. (Another contentious issue divided the Army and the Air Force—namely, determining which should have primary responsibility in land-based air defense.) The Navy and Marine Corps felt out-gunned on such issues in the JCS; because the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) was not on the JCS, the Army and Air Force representatives could unite against the Chief of Naval Operations on naval issues.

### **Key West**

With no agreement in sight, on 10 March 1948 Forrestal summoned the Joint Chiefs to a four-day conference at Key West in the first serious attempt to rebuild the armed forces since the onset of demobilization. As Forrestal put it, the focus was to determine "who will do what with what." The "Functions Paper" resulting from the conference would serve for years as a general delineation of service roles and missions. The paper provided a far more detailed statement of primary and secondary service missions than did Executive Order 9877. In general terms, mission assignments remained the same as traditionally conceived, with the Navy assigned primary combat at sea, the Army land combat, the Marines amphibious warfare, and the Air Force strategic air

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warfare, air defense of CONUS, and air support of ground units. Forrestal summarized the key compromise terms as follows:

- . . . Marine Corps to be limited to four divisions. . . Marines are not to create another land army.
- Air Force recognizes right of Navy to proceed with the development of weapons the Navy considers essential to its function but. . . the Navy will not develop another strategic air force, this function being reserved to the Air Force. However, the Navy in the carrying out of its function is to have the right to attack inland targets. . .
- Air Force recognizes the right and need for the Navy to participate in an all-out campaign. . . . Navy not to be denied use of A-bombs.

In addition, the Army was assigned responsibility for antiaircraft artillery.

## **Newport**

The Key West agreement proved tenuous, at best, especially with regard to the Navy-Air Force agreement on air roles and missions. In August 1948, the JCS met again at Forrestal's invitation at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. This conference ironed out two critical agreements. The first clarified the Key West agreement, defining the term *primary mission* in such a way that other services were not precluded from pursuing a mission as an appropriate adjunct to their own missions even if another service was assigned the same task as a primary mission. This agreement primarily related to the Air Force-Navy dispute over Navy access to atomic weapons and strategic bombing planning. The second agreement led to the establishment of the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group (WSEG), which was to provide an impartial evaluation of new weapons programs.

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During this time period, the renewed Navy-Air Force battle over strategic bombing provided a central and highly visible feature of the scramble for limited defense resources. Despite Forrestal's reprimand of Air Force Secretary Stuart Symington for his and other unauthorized Air Force Congressional testimony, Air Force testimony continued to state that national security needs required that the Air Force receive a greater share of the defense budget. At the same time, the Navy did not pursue such visible tactics. Contributing factors to this approach included the commitment to unification by the new Secretary of the Navy, John L. Sullivan, and his discouragement of any public criticism of other services.

Following the war, through the end of the decade, the Navy had three organizational responses to the unification and roles and missions debates. The first two were working groups supporting the Secretary of the Navy during the unification debates. Captain Arleigh Burke headed the third and only formal response, OP-23, which provided the central focus until its disestablishment in November 1949. Burke's original task was to keep the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) informed of all facets of the ongoing debate. Because of its increasing expertise, Burke's group became responsible for writing point papers and ghostwriting articles for senior admirals.

## **Revolt of the Admirals**

The most critical battle during this period followed cancellation of the flush-deck aircraft carrier *United States*. Shortly after Forrestal resigned, the new Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson decided to cancel the carrier. Because Johnson had not consulted him on the decision, Secretary of the Navy Sullivan resigned. Johnson's cuts of naval forces continued. The July 1949 budget request for 1950 cut attack carriers and Marine aviation squadrons in half, but provided the Air Force with funds for additional B-36 intercontinental bombers. In the fall of 1949 came the

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“Revolt of the Admirals” hearings in which virtually the entire Navy leadership repudiated Johnson’s decision and attacked the Air Force’s concept of defense on the cheap based on an “atomic blitz.”

In defense of the carrier, Navy advocates mobilized numerous arguments. For example, while Secretary of the Navy, Forrestal pressed the carrier’s role as the “gray diplomat.” The CNO, Admiral Louis E. Denfeld, argued that the Navy looked to a combined-arms effort to frustrate a Soviet attack on NATO and that the Navy, after winning control of the sea, would exert “steady, unrelenting pressure” against the Soviets. These arguments did not register well, as the Air Force (and many Congressmen) perceived the *United States* as devoted solely to the nuclear (and strategic) bombing mission, which the Air Force considered its sole preserve. Many perceived the Navy testimony as retribution for the carrier’s cancellation rather than the public airing of long-held criticism it really represented.

While the Navy fought to retain naval aviation, the Marine Corps fought for its existence. The Army sought to limit the Marine Corps’ size and to gain primary responsibility for amphibious operations. This too became an issue in the hearings, with the other services and Johnson outright denying any Army attempt to sabotage the Marine Corps or to undermine its primary responsibility.

In March 1950, five months after the hearings, the committee’s final report proved a compromise among all parties. It rejected the Navy attacks on the B-36, using a Navy argument that credence should be given to the views of the uniformed experts in the field. On the other hand, it noted that the “Air Force is not synonymous with the Nation’s military air power,” thus rejecting the integration of naval aviation into the Air Force and the concept that strategic bombing represented the only valid aviation mission.

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## THE FIFTIES TO THE EIGHTIES AND GOLDWATER-NICHOLS

By the middle of the Korean War, the debate over roles and missions subsided. The debate receded partially due to closure or compromise on the divisive issues of the late 1940s, partially due to a growing ironing out of the kinks in the unification process, and, perhaps most significantly, due to a reopening of the budgetary floodgates for defense.

### 1952 Modifications

For the Marine Corps, 1952 represented a pivotal year. In part due to the Korean War and the Marines' performance there, and in part due to astute Congressional lobbying, the Marine Corps gained statutory status with: a legislated size; legislated roles and missions; and a legislative partial status for the CMC on the JCS. Since then the Commandant has gained full status as a member of the Joint Chiefs; otherwise, the legislation still remains valid today in defining the Marine Corps roles and functions. It reads, in part, that the Marine Corps shall be organized in

not less than three combat divisions, three air wings, and such other [forces] as may be organic therein. . .[to] provide fleet marine forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components, for service with the fleet in the seizure and defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign.

The law also recognized the Marine Corps' preeminence in the development of "doctrines, tactics, techniques, and equipment employed by landing forces in amphibious operations." A key element, derived in part from assessments of the Korean War experience to date, named the Marine Corps the nation's force in readiness "to suppress or contain international disturbances short of war."

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After the resolution of Marine and naval aviation roles and functions, the interdepartmental wrangling over roles and functions shifted predominantly to Army-Air Force issues. The split of the Army into two separate departments left many unresolved issues. The two services attempted to solve the issues over control of aviation with a series of definitional boundaries on what air power the Army could operate. Numerous examples of this type of arrangement exist. The two services used limits on weights of helicopters and transport aircraft as one means to delineate between responsibilities. A 1956 agreement used ranges as a demarcation between services. It sought to avoid Army duplication of Air Force capabilities in the close-air support mission and not only precluded the Army from providing aircraft for close-air support, but also limited all Army fixed-wing aviation operations to a distance no greater than 100 miles from the contact line with enemy troops. The critical issue for the Army was to guarantee close-air support, which it never considered to have a high enough priority in the Air Force. These arrangements remained tenuous and became brittle with technological developments.

## **1958 Amendments**

The next major round of defense reorganization came in 1958. A long-time and strong advocate of greater military centralization, President Eisenhower proposed a radical restructuring of the military. He urged that “we must free ourselves of emotional attachments to service systems of an era that is no more.” Separate ground, sea, and air warfare was gone forever, and the “well-meaning attempts to protect traditional concepts and prerogatives” impaired a “fully effective defense.”

As part of the defense reorganization, Eisenhower called for the transfer from the legislative to the executive branch of the right to determine service roles and missions. This effort to restrict Congressional involvement highlights another traditional interservice battleground. In general, the Army and the Air Force

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have preferred greater executive branch control of defining military roles and missions. The Navy and, more especially, the Marine Corps have preferred that this power reside in the legislative branch. Many theories could explain this difference. That those seeking to absorb other services' roles and functions would prefer the route that would present the fewest obstacles to change (i.e., executive order rather than Congressional legislation) provides one possible explanation. Personalities might also explain this difference. For example, both President Truman and President Eisenhower had Army backgrounds and some might have expected them to favor Army proposals.

Like earlier acts, the 1958 Reorganization Act represented a series of compromises. The Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) gained a broad latitude to change service functions with one constraint. With regard to "statutory functions" (roles and missions), SECDEF had to report details to the two armed services committees, and either arm of Congress could block any changes with a majority vote.

The 1958 reforms proved to be the last major reorganization of the armed services for almost three decades until the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act. Over this period, frequent adjustments in assigned roles and missions occurred—primarily in fault zones and primarily on the margins. For example, both the Air Corps and Navy operated air transport services at the end of World War II. In 1948, SECDEF Forrestal created the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) to oversee air transport. Over the next two decades, MATS took over more of the airlift support to all services and, in 1965, was redesignated the Military Airlift Command (MAC). By 1967, all Navy portions of MAC had been transferred to the Air Force. By the mid 1970s, MAC controlled all "airlift" assets (other than Navy carrier onboard delivery aircraft and Marine KC-130 tankers). Similarly, over a three-decade period, the Air Force gained the preeminent role in space programs,

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with all services retaining access to space programs through the formation of Space Command in September 1985.

### **DOD Directive 5100.1**

In 1954 came DOD directive 5100.1, "Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff." The basic definitions of service functions had not changed significantly from those set out in the Key West agreement (with the important exception of an explicit legislative definition of Marine Corps roles and functions in 1952). The significant change came in the definition of the chain of command. Since 1954, this document has been revised eight times. From the 1950s to the late 1980s, the greatest changes have come in the realm of unification of command and control, with both the 1958 Reorganization Act and the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act significantly increasing the powers of the unified commanders and, especially, the power of the Chairman of the JCS. These changes have eliminated any direct service role in operational command and control.

### **CONTINUITY BETWEEN DEBATES**

A number of issues have remained controversial among the services in the debates over roles, functions, and missions. In essence, debate occurs in the fault zones—the areas of real or potential overlap among the services.

Throughout this century, certain issues have remained almost constantly at the center of controversy. For example, the question of which service should control aviation has remained contentious since it was first raised at the end of the last century. In the early days of U.S. power-flight research, the Navy Department expressed an interest in funding aviation research but could not do so because, at that time, the power-flight programs were all

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land-based and thus became a Department of War responsibility. After the end of World War I, General Mitchell led the charge for a unified air service that would, in his proposals, include all aviation in the U.S. military—eliminating the naval air arm. Following World War II, the Army Air Corps (and then the Air Force) pursued a similar agenda.

Coastal defense has provided another area of long-term inter-service dispute. The development of aviation also created new terms of debate in this realm. The increasing range and capability of aviation stretched this debate beyond “coastal defense,” *per se*, into questions of maritime patrol and control of the sea. The two departments struggled to reach a working understanding of relative responsibilities. In 1920, the War Department General Staff agreed that naval aircraft bore responsibility for all over-water reconnaissance and all aerial attacks at sea. A decade later, in 1931, General MacArthur, then Chief of Staff of the Army, and Admiral William V. Pratt, the CNO, agreed that the Army Air Corps would bear the primary responsibility for land-based attacks on an enemy invasion fleet. The two departments spent the next decade debating what this agreement meant.

In the opening years of World War II, the Army fought the release of four-engine aircraft (which had been reserved for the Army Air Corps) to the Navy for antisubmarine patrols, arguing that, like the Royal Air Force’s Coastal Command, the Army Air Corps could, and should, conduct the missions. (The Navy received the bombers starting in 1942.) Following the war, the Air Corps (later the Air Force) fought first for control of all aviation, then of all land-based aviation, including the responsibility for maritime patrol. The Navy retained the right, however, to land-based aviation integral to naval functions. This issue did not disappear in the 1940s. Since then, although disagreements have continued, efforts have concentrated on deriving means to ameliorate conflicts resulting from overlapping service missions and capabilities. For example, in 1975, the two services signed a “Naval

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Air Pact" that provided for training Air Force units in the search and identification of enemy surface vessels, radar jamming, and minelaying. Memoranda of understanding on such areas as U.S. Air Force early warning support to naval operations also represent attempts to better delineate service roles and missions.

A wide range of similarly consistent issues have remained part of the roles and missions debate. These include: land power (the Marines as a "second Army"); close-air support and fixed-wing vs. rotary aircraft (primarily Army/Air Force issues); nuclear weapons; ballistic missile development; logistics and procurement; sealift; space; plans; communications; and intelligence. Funding and cost savings play a major role in these debates. As a central element of their case, proponents of defense unification almost always point toward the fiscal savings that, they argue, would inevitably result from ending duplication of capabilities through the consolidation of functions within and between services.

## **WHY TODAY'S DEBATE?**

The following basic themes drive the debates over changes in the roles and functions of the military services: strategic, technological, and fiscal/resource developments. Each contributes in its own way, but the debate intensifies when all three of the elements are present. The last factor, however, may be the most critical, as in times of spendthrift budgets less incentive exists for attacking other services' roles and functions. The last all-out debate over service roles and functions came in the late 1940s, when all three features were present and prominent.

### **Strategic Developments**

Examples of strategic developments would include the late nineteenth century U.S. imperialism and move into the race for a

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colonial empire; post-World War I retrenchment and partial alignment with Great Britain; global power status in a bipolar world after World War II; and the fall of the Soviet Union over the past several years. At the end of World War II, the United States faced an entirely new strategic reality. The United States now no longer was *a* but *the* preeminent global power, no longer able to shelter behind European powers such as Great Britain and France in facing potential adversaries. The United States had to face up to its new global burden and determine how to confront the growing threat posed by Stalin's Soviet Union.

## **Technological Developments**

Technological developments influencing the debates include developments in aviation, nuclear weapons, guided weapons, information technology, and the growing exploitation of space. World War II had also seen tremendous technological change, with great advances in such realms as electronics, aviation, and radar. Most visibly, the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ushered in a new era, where annihilation from the sky could come in the form of a single bomb. General Eisenhower believed that "modern weapons and methods of war have scrambled traditional service functions." Separate ground, sea, and air warfare was "gone forever." One facet of the debate, the mainstream Air Force view in the late 1940s, focused on air delivery of the atomic bomb from the continental United States (CON-US) as the means toward a cheap defense.

## **Fiscal and Resource Constraints**

Finally, it seems that fiscal restraints (especially those imposed in post-war eras when defense cutbacks are looked to for funds for domestic programs) foster interservice rivalry and thus foster interservice competition for control over various roles and functions. Fiscal restraints also lead to greater outside scrutiny in

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the search for the best defense for a buck. In the late 1940s, cheapness was key, as President Harry Truman and the country demanded drastic cutbacks in allocations to defense. Changes in the strategic environment and technological developments called for a review of roles and missions. The drastic cutbacks in defense appropriations following the war transformed this review into a cutthroat battle for scarce resources among organizations concerned about their survival in addition to their differing conceptions of the best strategic posture for the country's defense.

## **The Current Debate**

Today, two of the three factors—strategic change and fiscal constraints—are overwhelmingly present. The collapse of the Soviet Union and, for the indefinite future, the end to a global military threat create an entirely new strategic situation for the country. Economic hardships and the continually growing deficit create an environment in which the Defense Department can expect continued budget reductions. In addition, technological change in such areas as precision-guided munitions, stealth, and information technology proceeds at the rapid pace that has continued almost unfettered since World War II.

The existence of all three factors indicates that the current debate over roles and functions might only heighten in intensity as interconnections between these definitions and budgetary allocations become clearer. Over the past several years, in the opening salvos of this round of interservice debate over roles and functions, the debate has closely paralleled that of the late 1940s. Like the earlier period, Air Force advocates have spared no barrels in attacks on Navy forces and capabilities. Secretary of the Air Force Donald Rice, for example, consistently argued that B-2s from CONUS could conduct the crisis-response mission more effectively than U.S. Navy aviation operating from aircraft carriers. Media statistical battles about the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of various services' efforts during Operations Desert

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Shield and Desert Storm might fall into the same category of interservice competition for budgetary resources. The U.S. Army's light infantry divisions, interest in an Army Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) equivalent, and the search for an Army mission away from European tank battles indicate a possible renewed assault on the Marine Corps' role as the nation's expeditionary force.

Closure to the post-World War II debate came not necessarily as a result of real agreement on each service's roles and functions nor as a result of a fundamental resolution on the best method to organize the nation's defense structure, but as a result of the emergence of a new fiscal reality based on a change in the strategic situation. In other words, the Korean War and the reopened floodgate for defense dollars dampened the urge for interservice attacks in the search for a greater share of the budget pie. Such a dramatic endnote to this round should not be expected.

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## SOURCES ON ROLES, MISSIONS, AND FUNCTIONS

This paper provides little more than a conceptual approach to and overview of debates over roles, missions, and functions. A relatively rich literature exists on this subject. This essay briefly reviews the literature consulted in the writing of this paper and should provide a starting point for those interested in further pursuing the subject.

For published primary material, see Maj. William W. Epley, USA, *Roles and Missions of the United States Army: Basic Documents With Annotations and Bibliography*, Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, DC, 1991; and, Richard I. Wolf, *The United States Air Force Basic Documents on Roles and Missions*, Office of Air Force History, Washington, DC, 1987. Both works provide limited introductions and analysis of the material in addition to publication of major documents. Epley's work goes back to the eighteenth century, and, not surprisingly, Wolf's looks at only the twentieth. To date, neither the Navy nor Marine Corps history branches have published an equivalent collection examining the documents from a naval perspective.

In the early 1960s, however, the Marine Corps historical branch conducted a roles and missions study. (Col. Thomas G. Roe, USMC, et al., *A History of Marine Corps Roles and Missions: 1775-1962*, Marine Corps Historical Reference Series Number 30, Historical Branch, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1962.) Although dated, this work is essential for anyone interested in the topic. Other useful works focusing on the Marine Corps include, Lt.Gen. Victor H. Krulak, USMC (ret.), *First To Fight*, Annapolis, MD, 1984; and, Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, second edition, New York, 1991.

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A wide body of literature exists on the period 1944-1950 as the unification debates have attracted significant scholarly attention. Among the more important works to consult are: Demetrios Caraley, *The Politics of Defense Unification*, New York, 1966; Paul Y. Hammond, *Organizing for Defense: The American Military Establishment in the Twentieth Century*, Princeton, 1961; and, Maj. Laurence J. Legere, USA, *Unification of the Armed Forces*, Harvard University, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1950 (reprinted by Garland Publishing, New York, 1988). Other valuable works include: Steven L. Rearden, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, vol. 1, *The Formative Years, 1947-1950*, Washington, DC, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1984; Col. Gordon W. Keiser, USMC, *The US Marine Corps and Defense Unification, 1944-1947*, National Defense University Press, 1982; David A. Rosenberg, "American Postwar Air Doctrine and Organization: The Navy Experience," *Air Power and Warfare*, Proceedings of the Eighth Military History Symposium, USAF Academy, 1978; and four articles on "The Defense Unification Battle, 1947-50" (Philip A. Crowl, "What Price Unity," Paolo E. Coletta, "The Navy," Herman S. Wolk, "The Air Force," and, Richard F. Haynes, "The Army.") in *Prologue*, Spring 1975. For a developmental discussion, see the essays in Paul R. Schratz, editor, *Evolution of the American Military Establishment Since World War II*, Lexington, VA, 1978. For a documentary history of the establishment of the Department of Defense, see Alice C. Cole et al., editors, *The Department of Defense: Documents on Establishment and Organization, 1944-1978*, Washington, DC, Office of the Secretary of Defense Historical Office, 1978.

In addition to the material above, many works have focused on the Navy at the end of World War II. Vincent Davis' two books (*Postwar Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, 1943-1946* and *The Admiral's Lobby*, Chapel Hill, 1966 and 1967, respectively) are crucial starting points. For a useful study examining nuclear weapons developments and aircraft carriers, see David A.

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Rosenberg and Floyd D. Kennedy, Jr., *History of the Strategic Arms Competition, 1945-1972. Supporting Study: U.S. Aircraft Carriers in the Strategic Role. Part I: Naval Strategy in a Period of Change: Interservice Rivalry, Strategic Interaction, and the Development of a Nuclear Attack Capability, 1945-1951*, Falls Church, VA, Lulejian & Associates, October 1975.

The "Revolt of the Admirals" has also proved an attractive area for scholarship. See, for example, Paul Y. Hammond, "Super Carriers and B-36 Bombers: Appropriations, Strategy and Politics," in *American Civil-Military Decisions: A Book of Case Studies*, edited by Harold Stein, University, Alabama, 1963; Dean Allard, "Interservice Differences in the United States, 1945-1950: A Naval Perspective," *Airpower Journal*, Winter 1989; Keith D. McFarland, "The 1949 Revolt of the Admirals," *Parameters*, June 1981; James C. Freund, "Revolt of the Admirals," *Airpower Historian*, January and April 1963; and, for some of the more important Congressional testimony, see: U.S. House of Representatives, *The National Defense Program—Unification and Strategy*, Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services, 81st Congress, 1st session, Washington, DC, 1949.

For discussions of airlift, see: Roger D. Launius, "Military Unification's Precursor: The Air Force and Navy Strategic Airlift Merger of 1948," *Air Power History*, Spring 1992; and, Jeffry S. Underwood, *Task Paper in Airlift History: Military Airlift Comes of Age: Consolidation of Strategic and Tactical Air Forces Under the Military Airlift Command, 1974-1977*, Office of History, Military Airlift Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, revised, January 1990. For a discussion of aviation and coastal defense in the interwar years, see: LCol. John F. Shiner, USAF, "The Air Corps, the Navy, and Coast Defense, 1919-1941," *Military Affairs*, October 1981.

This document derives from work done in August 1992, sparked in part by a speech by Senator Sam Nunn (2 July 1993).

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Since that time, many others (including journalists, members of Congress, and researchers) have given attention to this subject matter. This paper did not rely on any of this newly published material. As required further reading, however, one should examine the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staffs, General Colin Powell, USA, February 1993 *Report on the Roles, Missions and Functions of the Armed Forces*. Also important is John Collins, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report 93-72S, *Roles and Functions of U.S. Combat Forces: Past, Present, and Prospects*, January 1993. In addition to highlighting key issues, the report includes 40 pages of the more important historical material on roles and missions.

Several other groups have focused on calls for change in the current roles and functions definitions. The following are two of the more important publications. In October 1992, the Business Executives for National Security (BENS) published an issue brief by Robert Gaskin entitled *After the Cold War, How Much Defense Is Enough? Shaping Military Roles and Missions To Secure the Newly Won Peace*. Gaskin has long advocated revisiting the definitions of service roles and missions; this issue brief calls for, among other things, eliminating the Marine Corps' fixed-wing capabilities. In early March, the Henry Stimson Center in Washington, DC, issued Barry Blechman et al., *Key West Reconsidered*. This study, too, calls for a reevaluation of military roles and missions in light of the end of the Cold War. Its proposed reforms seek "to bring about greater specialization among the services in combat functions." The coming months and years will likely bring many more studies on defense roles and missions as the nation attempts to cope with radical strategic and technological change in an era of defense budget cutbacks.